

III. CROSSLIE

LONGFELLOW.
*Scene at the Centennial Exhibition. He Was In
 the Exhibition.*
 During the Centennial year we were
 sitting together one beautiful afternoon
 in his parlor, smoking and talking.
 While we were in the midst of our con-
 versation I observed two men and two
 women coming toward us across the
 lawn. They were obviously New Eng-
 land country folks returning from the
 Centennial Exhibition. The men had
 the slow, deliberate, rustic walk, and
 were dressed in ill-fitting broadcloth,
 the very look of which made one per-
 ceive. The women, who were leading
 the way, had an appearance of placid
 and enterprise, as if they were deter-
 mined to conquer the modest diffidence
 of their companions. Mr. Longfellow
 was sitting with his back to the street,
 and did not observe them until they
 were within a yard of the piazza. He
 looked a little surprised, but arose and
 saluted the intruders with his wonted
 courtesy.

"Do you the poet Longfellow?"
 asked one of the women, in a voice that
 was incredibly melodious.
 "Yes, I am Mr. Longfellow," he an-
 swered.

There was an awkward pause, during
 which the visitors stared at the poet
 with unabashed glances as if he had been
 a Centennial relic on exhibition.

"Now, how old a man might you be?"
 queried the other female, abruptly.
 "I am 69 years old, madam."

"Pardon me you look considerably
 older," said one of them, looking up
 sideways at Mr. Longfellow's face with
 a critical air.

"My looks may belie me. I am no
 older."

I could not but wonder at the extreme
 audacity with which he answered those
 blunt questions, showing no annoyance
 in his face and no resentment. And
 then, finally, at their request, he con-
 ducted the party through the house, he
 submitted with the same gentle courtesy
 to a cross examination regarding his
 family and personal affairs which would
 have tried the patience of the archangel
 himself. When, at the end of half an
 hour, he returned, apologizing for his
 absence, I made a remark which was,
 perhaps, a little disrespectful to his late
 visitors.

"They meant no disrespect to me by
 their questions," he answered, with that
 gentle gentleness which was so char-
 acteristic of his manner. "It is perfect-
 ly proper, where they come from, to in-
 quire one's self in the personal affairs of
 everybody."

"But it must be a great inconvenience
 to you," I observed, "to be so frequent-
 ly disturbed by such excursions."

"Well, during the present year I ad-
 mit it has been a little trying. Never-
 theless I always dislike sending a man
 or woman away who has come out here
 for the purpose of seeing me or my house.
 Of course I have to do it occasionally,
 but it is always disagreeable to me need-
 lessly to disappoint any one. Those
 women whom you saw are a good staunch
 New England type, and I like them in
 spite of their lack of tact and their ab-
 rupt manners. They are good, hard-
 working women, who make good wives
 and good mothers. And yet, the other
 day, I was greatly amused at one of the
 same class who came here with a large
 basket whether she had anything to
 tell me or not, apparently for the
 purpose of telling me that she had
 read 'Hesperine' from beginning to
 end, and, she added, 'there hasn't been
 anything new in that.' I am convinced now
 that she had no intention of being rude
 to me; she was merely awkward and
 ignorant, and said what she did mean
 to say. I asked her if she had found the
 reading of 'Hesperine' such a dreadful
 task. The question seemed to surprise
 her; she grew quite flustered, and I showed
 gently that she had no resolution of
 having said anything uncomplimentary."

Longfellow's long beard has always
 been a good deal of attention, and
 has been many times the subject of
 jest. Another von Tallberg, a German
 knight, and Comptroller of Maximilian
 II. (1858), reported in a beard which
 reached to his feet, and from there again
 to his waist. John May, a celebrated
 painter of the sixteenth century, who
 accompanied Charles V. in his campaign,
 had a beard so long that, although he
 was a tall man, it would hang upon the
 ground when he stood upright; he was
 a great favorite, and, according to his
 biographer, tasted to his girdle.

Queen Elizabeth, sent by Queen
 Mary as one of her agents, in 1555, to
 visit Ivan the Terrible, is said to have
 had a beard the feet two inches long.
 In the olden time, when every part of
 the body had its price, the beard was
 valued at 20 shillings—a large sum for
 the time—while the loss of a leg was
 only estimated at 12 shillings.

We can easily imagine that, at periods
 such as the last, and whiskers were looked
 upon as ornamental, false beards were
 substituted for the genuine article. Pe-
 trarch (14), of Avignon (1374), found himself
 compelled to prohibit his Catalonian
 subjects from wearing false beards. But
 the most singular substitute is the gold-
 en beard which, Chrysostomus says, was
 worn by the Kings of Persia. Suetonius
 tells us the same of Caligula, the Roman
 Emperor. According to Andreus Favyn,
 the Kings of France of the first dynasty
 wore beards entwined with gold threads.

St. Bernard, of Lorraine, was the last.
 It is related that he wore at the funeral
 of Charles of Burgundy, who died
 in 1477, a beard of gold thread
 hanging down to his girdle. Beards
 were taxed in England. In Europe
 and a portion of Asia beards prevail,
 and we go beyond India, when they
 suddenly disappear.

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